

Air Force Prime Time, a weekly news magazine for and about airmen stationed overseas, airs Thursday evenings at 8:25 p.m. Central European Time on AFN television. In this week's edition, the new European guidelines for gun owners in Germany, the Air Force wants everyone to check if their gas mask is faulty, career advisers and more.

News briefs

Black heritage banquet

The Black Cultural Awareness Association banquet takes place at 6 p.m. Saturday in the Spang Club. Menu choices include Cornish game hen or ribeye steak. Tickets for the semi-formal event are \$20 per person and available by calling David Lewis at 452-7818 or Tech. Sgt. Dion Baker at 452-6407.

Good neighbors

Being a good neighbor is vital to maintaining and strengthening ties between military and local community members, said housing officials.

Dog owners are required to clean up after their dogs in on- and off-base housing and common areas. Picking up after dogs is essential for sanitary conditions, especially as the weather gets warmer and children begin to play outside more often.

Also, dogs are not allowed in Binsfeld Dorfplatz area behind the Kreissparkasse bank, said Lothar Herres, Binsfeld mayor.

Earth Week

The Earth Week working group meets at 3 p.m. March 13 in building 127 on Spangdahlem Air Base. Also, the group seeks Earth Week event volunteers. Call Colleen Wilcox at 452-5125 for details or to sign up.

Supply inventory

The 52nd Supply Squadron Individual Equipment Element closes March 19-23 for inventory. People requiring services within these dates should call Tech. Sgt. Raul Wilshire at 452-6866 for more information.

Club cards

Members deployed more than 30 days to a base without a club, such as some bases in Southwest Asia, can take a copy of their orders to their assigned base club and have their dues

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Eifel Times

Vol. 35, Issue 8

Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany

March 2, 2001

Tax shelter volunteer Staff Sgt. James Ludwig, 52nd Fighter Wing, helps Airman John Schroeder, 52nd FW, files his federal income tax return.

Volunteers make doing taxes 'EZ'

By Senior Airman Jennifer Lindsey
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

More than 980 people have taken advantage of the base's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance since mid-February and the appointments continue to flow.

Volunteers help take the sting out of doing federal returns by providing free electronic filing, according to Senior Airman Brett Wiest, who's used VITA for a second consecutive year.

"It's a lot easier and less frustrating than doing it myself," said Wiest of the 52nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron.

Getting federal income taxes done through VITA is pretty simple, said Bonnie Holas, Spangdahlem Air Base VITA program manager. Customers have the choice of making an appointment or

just stopping by, but should keep in mind appointments take precedence over walk ins. Also, customers need not worry if their taxes require a Form 1040 EZ or a more intricate form. Volunteers also take care of that.

Customers wanting to make an appointment should call a unit tax advisor. A complete list of more than 100 unit tax advisors is available on the base intranet at 52fw/ja.law.af.mil or at the tax shelter on the first floor of building 129.

Whether they're just walking in or scheduled, all customers should bring in the following items: W2s, all investment earnings for 2000, social security numbers of family members and private child-care providers, day care expenses, interest earned from dividends and sales of stocks

or property, and all other income sources including supplemental income.

Wing members stationed at geographically-separated units also have access to the free tax assistance. A two-person shop at Buechel Air Base, Germany, has processed 30 tax files since mid-February, saving those families a trip to Spangdahlem AB for the service.

Staff Sgt. Jason Schenck said he volunteers for VITA because he always wanted to learn how to file taxes and he enjoys helping others with theirs.

The shelter also plans to provide state income tax assistance sometime in late March or early April. The tax shelter is currently waiting for the software and forms to arrive from the states, Holas said.

Call the base tax shelter at 452-6572 for more information.

Wing holds awards banquet honoring its best of 2000

52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

The 52nd Fighter Wing honored its annual award winners during a ceremony Saturday in the Skelton Memorial Fitness Center.

By the end of the night, a pavements and equipment journeyman, Terminal Instrument Procedures NCOIC, wing plans superintendent, geographically-separated unit first sergeant and sortie generation flight commander emerged as the best of the best in the Eifel for 2000.

The wing also honored its top civilian employees and other special-category award winners at the formal dinner ceremony.

Here's a look at the wing winners and a few of their accomplishments in 2000:

Airman 1st Class Richard Railing Jr., 52nd Civil

Engineer Squadron pavements and equipment journeyman, is the wing Airman of the Year. Lt. Col. Kim Traver, 52nd CES commander, nominated him for his efforts in increasing mission effectiveness by enabling the wing to increase sortie generations while simultaneously reducing wing Foreign Object Damage costs from \$3 million to \$10,000 in only three years. He also helped the Air Force Civil Engineer Service Agency in providing a detailed Pavements Condition Index of the entire airfield; thereby, assisting CE in reassessing and updating its five-year maintenance plan. During the year, he also scored a 98

percent on his "A-set" Career Development Course end-of-course exam. In his spare time, Railing donated time to renovate both the Girl Scout gift-wrapping booth and hut, and to set up the Boy Scout Christmas tree containment area.

The NCO of the Year is Tech. Sgt. Frederick Soechting Jr., 52nd Operations Support Squadron. As the Terminal Instrument Procedures NCOIC, Lt. Col. Brian Smith, 52nd OSS commander, praised his work in using computer-

Railing

Soechting

See Wing's best, Page 3

Virtual MPF puts personal info at finger tips

By Tech. Sgt. Rich Romero
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

Among the many topics discussed by the deputy chief of staff for personnel during "Spread the Word" briefings on base recently was the virtual military personnel flight.

Lt. Gen. Don Peterson explained vMPF ultimately will allow people to access more than 80 percent of MPF functions from their home, office or deployed location computers by the end of the year.

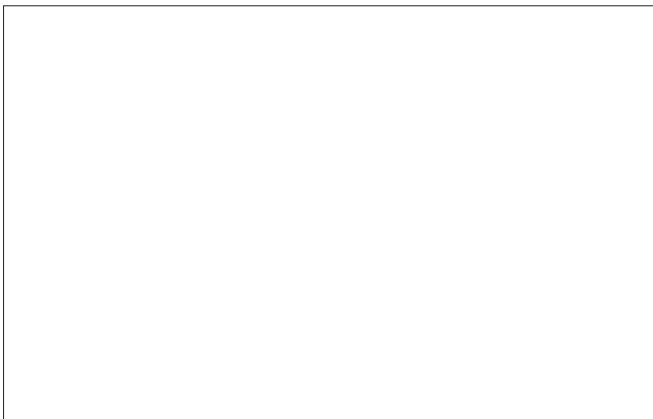
Members worldwide asked the Air Force in 1999 for more web-based personnel services. The vMPF is just one of several initiatives in a five-goal Air Force personnel vision implementation plan. These goals focus on improving readiness, sustaining recruiting and retention, streamlining personnel processes, implementing total force strategies and increased technology use to enhance personnel support.

In November, the vMPF became a hit at the Worldwide Personnel Conference when it introduced the fast, convenient, accurate, efficient and secure way to conduct personnel business from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days year, Peterson said.

"The virtual military personnel flight provides user-friendly, self-service capability to all Air Force members allowing them to review, maintain and initiate certain actions from any location," he said. "It allows our people the option of doing MPF functions themselves instead of having to go to the MPF, if one's available. For our deployed troops, they don't have to wait to get home to do them."

Additional services are brought online in increments. The fourth increment is projected to be released in June and features an awards and decorations printout that actually depicts each person's ribbon rack as it should look on the uniform.

"If it's 11 at night on a Sunday and you need to check your ribbons but don't have the 1978 copy of the PME showing the order of



Senior Airman Oshawn Jefferson

The Air Force's new virtual Military Personnel Flight enables members to update information or access specific personnel programs from their home or office computer 24 hours daily.

precedence on the ribbons, go online and print a picture of how yours should look," Peterson said. "Lay the picture on the floor. After an hour, I can even eventually get my ribbons to look like the picture."

Other features Peterson highlighted are Veterans Administration home-loan certificates and marriage certification. He explained the Air Force worked with VA to allow people to pull up, fill out and print VA home-loan certifications.

"All people have to do afterward is go to the loan officer," he said. "The certification is good and there's no delay in waiting to receive the certification from the VA."

While the Air Force can't marry people, he said it could make it easier to certify via the Web.

Currently, the following functions are available with vMPF:

■Initial retirement or separation briefings: Allows members to complete their initial

separation/retirement briefing, fill out and print all necessary memorandums and lists all documents a member needs before reporting to the MPF.

■Continental United States Isolated Assignment Program: Allows members to volunteer for CONUS isolated assignments or request reassignment from CONUS isolated locations.

■Join Spouse Assignment Program: Explains program eligibility and ineligibility requirements, documentation and intent codes. It also allows people to fill out the application.

■Permissive PCS Assignment Program: Allows members to get information and apply for the permissive join spouse, expended permissive and CONUS assignment exchange programs.

■Sole Surviving Son or Daughter Assignment Restriction: Allows members to review eligibility, document requirements and examples and fill out the application.

■Proof of service: Allows a member to print a proof of service letter, a document needed by the VA when members are trying to buy a home. It's also used by other various organizations.

■Duty status history: Allows service members to obtain a listing of current and previous duty information, including effective dates, specialty codes and duty titles.

■Re-enlistment eligibility: Allows members to see if they are eligible to re-enlist or eligible for waiver consideration.

■Selective Re-enlistment Bonus eligibility: Determines eligibility for an SRB and what zone.

■Point credit history: Gives members the capability to view the points awarded toward retirement.

Eventually, the ability to perform personal data surf will be included, which allows members to review everything from their individual and performance report data, to duty assignment and qualification data; everything they normally review on their personal data printout provided by their commander support staff or unit orderly room.

More than 200 personnel processes are targeted for vMPF service. One of the personnel community's goals is to "use technology in such a way as to free up our personnel specialists to provide more personalized service to our customers where it's really needed," Peterson said. "At the same time, by giving the customer access to the virtual MPF, they can update their records when it's most convenient for them and avoid having to make a special trip to the MPF."

To use these services, people need to create an account for vMPF by going to [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/km/vMPF/vMPF-\(no hyphen\) HelpHome.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/km/vMPF/vMPF-(no hyphen) HelpHome.htm). For more information about vMPF, visit the knowledge management Web site at [www.afpc.rand-\(no hyphen\) olph.af.mil/km](http://www.afpc.rand-(no hyphen) olph.af.mil/km). (Air Force Personnel Center News Service contributed)

Briefs

Continued from Page 1

suspended until they return. Call Lynda Bidderman at 452-6992 for details.

Vehicle washing

The only authorized vehicle washing area on the Bitburg Annex is the services car wash near the gate. German environmental regulations deem the Bitburg area as a water protection zone; therefore, water pollutants and soaps are to be used only in designated areas. Call the 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron Environmental Flight at 452-6082 for details.

Air National Guard

Call Master Sgt. Michelle Israel at 480-9696 for more information about Air National Guard enlistment opportunities.

Recycling

Yellow recycling bags are available in building 127, the 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron Environmental Flight's new location. Call Tech. Sgt. Andy Harper at 452-5124 for details.

Accidents

By Tech. Sgt. Franklin McElhane
52nd Security Forces Squadron Reports and Analysis

Last week there were six major and 12 minor accidents in the Eifel region, with more than half occurring Saturday.

Icy roads contributed to all three major accidents early Saturday morning. At 1:08 a.m., the first major accident occurred on B-50 between Spangdahlem Air Base and Dudeldorf. An American driving a Toyota 4-Runner was traveling toward Bitburg Annex when he hit a patch of ice, slid off the road and lost control of the vehicle.

Thirty minutes after the first accident, a major accident happened on L-39. An American was operating an Isuzu Rodeo when he slid on a patch of ice, skidded off the road and rolled the vehicle. These two accidents prove that four-wheel-drive vehicles react the same as a two-wheel-drive vehicle on ice.

The third accident happened on B-50 near the Dudeldorf turnoff at 4 a.m., three hours after the first accident. The American, driving a 1997 Mercury, was traveling on B-50 when she lost control of her car, hit an embankment and flipped her vehicle.

Of the 12 minor accidents, more than half occurred on B-50. Nine (75 percent) of the minor accidents were because of "speed too fast for conditions." Two people were cited for "failure to report (an accident)" which may result in a 180-day suspension of driving privileges.

The damage estimates for minor accidents this past week totaled \$5,950. In addition, there were 44 citations issued of which eight were moving violations on B-50. As a result of the B-50 citations, those people are required to attend Course V Drivers Safety Improvement.

**If there's ice on the windshield, there may be ice on the road –
Leave early, drive slowly, arrive safely.**

Security forces member earns top ALS honor

By Staff Sgt. Mary Snead
Pitsenbarger Airman Leadership School

Senior Airman Paul Kilquist received the top honor among 49 other students graduating from Airman Leadership School, Class 01-3.

During the Feb. 14 graduation ceremony, the 52nd Security Forces Squadron member received the John Levitow Award. Senior Airman Thomas Sullivan of the 606th Air Control Squadron earned the academic and leadership awards.

Distinguished graduates were Senior Airmen Darren Cormier, 22nd Fighter Squadron; Brandon Tillman, 52nd SFS and Matthew Thomas, 852nd Munitions Support Squadron.

Other senior airmen graduating from the class were:

Eagle Flight

Charles Sherer, 606th ACS; John Geissbuhler, 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron; Jeremy Aumiller, 52nd Supply Squadron; Amanda Braddock, 606th ACS; Juan Diaz, 52nd Communications Squadron; Danielle Johnson, 52nd Comptroller Squadron; Clint Perrone, 52nd Operations Support Squadron; Dean Piersall, 22nd FS; Andrew Reaux, Jr., U.S. Air Forces in Europe Mission Support Squadron, Brussels, Belgium; Erika Shay, 52nd Fighter Wing; Matthew Thomas, 852nd MUNNS; Brian Van Hoose, 752nd MUNNS; Jack Walker,

52nd CS; Nana Saahene, 52nd Medical Group; William Simmons, 22nd FS and Keith Zeiglar, 52nd Component Repair Squadron.

Falcon Flight

Jason Linta, flight leader, 52nd CES; Tyler Hoffmann, 22nd FS; David Atkinson, Detachment 1, 86th Operations Group; John Biery, 52nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron; Crystal Burton, 52nd SUPS; Patrick Compton, 81st FS; Jeremy Curlin, 22nd FS; Steven Gamez, 852nd MUNNS; Jamie Ann Hendon, 52nd Services Squadron; Cameron Mann, 606th ACS; Rachel Olson, 52nd MDG; Sean Rawles,

606th ACS; Anthony Sprague, 52nd MUNNS and Charles Smith, 23rd FS.

Warthog Flight

Shawn Montgomery, flight leader, 606th ACS; Tana Kellner, 22nd FS; Ernesto Bolanos, 22nd FS; Deniz Braddock, USAF Air Postal Squadron, Det. 6; John Dulac, 606th ACS; Whitney Fordham, 52nd MUNNS; Derek Keener, 52nd CES; Charles Knight, 52nd FW; Kevin Lawson, 852nd MUNNS; Marc Saunders, 52nd CS; Richard Scoggins, 81st FS Shawn Shaut, 852nd MUNNS; David Wadsworth, 23rd FS; Michael Rayno, 52nd CS and Steven Roper, 52nd CRS.

Wing's best

Continued from Page 1

assisted design technology to rebuild an outdated obstacle database. As a result, he meticulously tracked nearly 4,000 obstacles within a 105-mile radius of the airfield. An Air Force Air Traffic System Evaluation report cited "several of his processes are the best seen to date within the command." He also conducted a thorough instrument landing systems evaluation as part of the \$92 million Rhein-Main Initiative. His work as a member of the United States Air Forces in Europe Airspace Tiger Team led to the development of a new flight departure corridor for alleviating congestion and eliminating training range conflicts. Outside the shop, he devoted more than 350 hours mentoring more than 90 airmen as NCOIC of the Airmen Professional Development Course.

Senior Master Sgt. Brooke

McLean, 52nd Fighter Wing plans superintendent, is the Senior NCO of the Year. As such, he manages a \$1.5 million support agreement program noted as best in USAFE, according to Lt. Col. Mark Sherrier, wing plans chief. He was the lead planner and wing point for Air Expeditionary Force 9 and 10, the first AEF deployment for the wing. He also handled the deployments of more than 1,175 people, 58 aircraft and 383 tons of cargo to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Italy, South Africa, Slovakia and Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., during the year. His efforts with AEF deployments spanned the spectrum as he organized chapel support for U.S. Army soldiers transiting Spangdahlem Air Base, and developed an AEF briefing for the First Term Airman's Center.

The First Sergeant of the Year is **Senior Master Sgt. Dennis Malenfant**, 470th Air Base Squadron, NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany. (The 470th ABS is the largest of the 48 geographically-separated units supported by the wing.) In his role as "shirt" for the largest GSU and the only operational flying unit with NATO, Malenfant provides guidance and leadership to more than 800 people assigned to two operating locations. As such, he established Geilenkirchen's first New Dad's Program to provide new fathers the opportunity to spend the first week of their newborn's life adjusting to the changes that come with the birth of a child. Col. David Johnson described him as "an unrivaled nurturer of tomorrow's Air Force Leaders" for his effort in

restructuring the Airman Leadership School curriculum to better prepare young airmen at Geilenkirchen. By organizing the use of base facilities, scheduling a variety of events and arranging for necessary administrative support, he not only ensured every student will be promoted on time, but save more than \$31,000 in TDY costs as well. Because of the lack of a senior NCO leadership seminar, he created a curriculum to prepare new master sergeants for the demands associated with being a "top three" – a first at GK. The initiative allowed 30 newly selected masters to attend local sessions, saving more than \$7,000 in TDYs.

Capt. Jeffrey Styers, 81st Fighter Squadron sortie generation flight commander, is the Company Grade Officer of the Year. Lt. Col. Mark Koechle, 81st FS commander, picked him to move from the 23rd Fighter Squadron to the unit to recover a steadily declining mission capability. In his first two months, the mission-capable rate jumped 12 percent and made the USAFE goal for the first time in six months. In preparing an AEF deployment to Kuwait, he took a low of 12 fully mission capable jets to 18 ready on launch day. With two-thirds of the squadron already deployed, Styers generated seven aircraft and crews for a short-notice deployment to Croatia and maintained a 100 percent FMC rate while there. He was the lead maintenance officer on USAFE's and NATO's first weapons training deployment to Slovakia, which paved the way for follow-on deployments by other USAFE squadrons. Styers also helped establish the squadron's dominance in maintenance accuracy – a Core Automated Maintenance System error rate of .07 in 12 months, the best in major command. With a .2 percent error rate with more than 12,000 transactions for the year, the unit beat the USAFE 1 percent standard.

The Junior-level Civilian of the Year is **Hans Braun**, 52nd Transportation Squadron vehicle body repair mechanic. Maj. Inez Sookma, 52nd TRANS commander, praised his innovation in fabricating and salvaging vehicle parts; thereby, saving more than \$52,000. In addition to saving money, his mechanical skills have saved time spent on repairs and unit equipment downtime. For example, he manufactured Mercedes flatbed pintle hook mount brackets which enables aerospace ground equipment to move equipment for maintenance and saved two hours per work order. He also replaced a 606th Air Control

Squadron all-terrain forklift window in just four hours, eight hours sooner than estimated, resulting in its return to the unit the same day to meet a deployment chalk time.

Peter Thiel, 52nd CES utilities systems foreman, is the Mid-level Civilian of the Year. His efforts to clean up a 2,000-liter heating oil spill prevented an environmental disaster when he devised a way to install a portable separator to eliminate contamination of surrounding soil and stream. Traver recognized him for changing procedures of supplying portable toilets for the semi-annual bazaar by hard-piping toilet containers to eliminate contractor pumping and saving \$3,000 a year. He also spearheaded the purchase of a \$230,000 portable hydraulic sewer trailer that saved \$100,000 annually in contractor-related expenses. Additionally, Thiel identified 60 new or recently built fire hydrants to be added into the new water distribution upgrade and saved another \$250,000 on the contract.

The Senior-level Civilian of the Year is **Helmut Disch**, 52nd Contracting Squadron CE support flight chief. As such, he manages the squadron's largest flight with active contracts of \$30.5 million. Maj. Scott Kiser, 52nd CONS commander, said he saved the Air Force more than \$758,000 during the year. His oversight of the \$20 million Simplified Acquisition Base Engineering Requirement contract helped convince CE of its advantages and is now the method of choice for the squadron. Disch also oversaw the award of 40 projects worth more than \$4.5 million toward mission and quality of life.

The wing also recognized several special-category winners at the banquet. Here's a look at the winners:

Tech. Sgt. Malik Sultan, 52nd CES, is the Honor Guard Member of the Year.

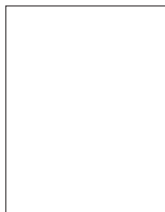
Master Sgt. Richard Chavez-Hatton, 606th ACS, is the Resource Manager of the Year.

Airman 1st Class Steven Peterson, 52nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, is the FOD Fighter of the Year.

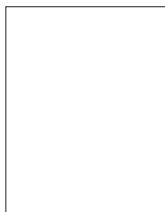
Capt. Robert Chavez, 81st FS, is the Instructor Pilot of the Year.

1st Lt. Joseph Campo, 22nd Fighter Squadron, is the Wingman of the Year.

Capt. Philippe Malebranche, 23rd FS, is the Flight Lead of the Year.



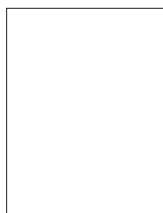
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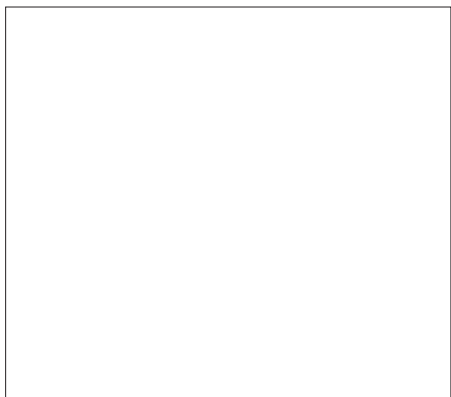
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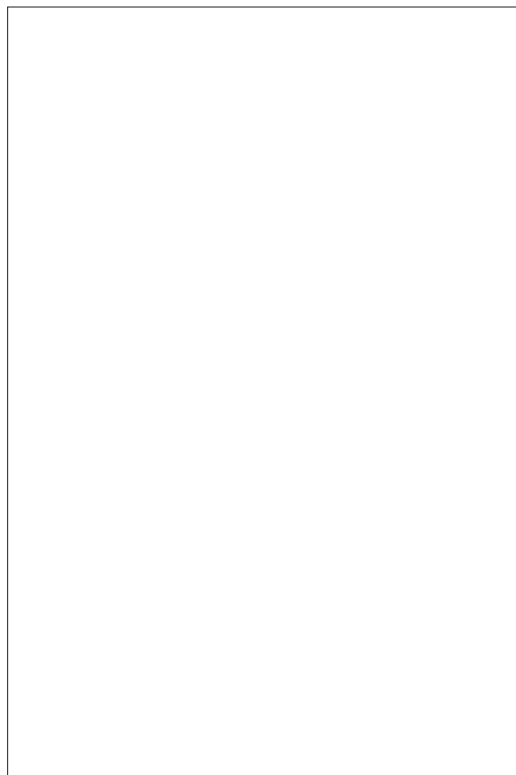
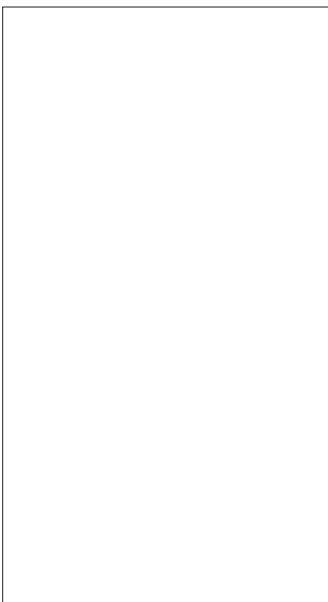


Disch



Photos by Senior Airman Jennifer Lindsey

Above: Cultures are grown inside a petri dish using special growth mediums, such as agar. Staff Sgt. Amy Stanfill, 52nd Medical Support Squadron laboratory technician holds a urine culture, testing for a urinary tract infection, in the top dish and a throat culture, testing for strep throat, in the lower dish. Right: Airman 1st Class Stephanie Wright, 52nd MDSS, draws a blood sample.



Staff. Sgt. James Green loads a vial of blood onto a chemistry analyzer to check a patient's cholesterol levels.

Doctors dedicate their lives to finding the answer to what ails us, but it's a quest that can't be done alone. Using petri dishes, test tubes and analyzers, medical lab technicians team up to help doctors in their . . .

Search for health

By Senior Airman Jennifer Lindsey
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

Drawing blood, growing bacterial cultures and testing urine isn't something most people would look forward to Monday morning, but for base medical laboratory technicians it's a living — a better living for wing community members through chemical and biological analysis.

"It's pretty interesting. You can tell so much from just a person's blood or urine," explained Staff Sgt. Amy Stanfill, 52nd Medical Support Squadron Laboratory Services Flight technician. "One chemistry profile offers more than 20 results and a complete blood count offers 14. This information assists providers to improve a person's state of health."

For families, this means peace of mind. For the wing and the Air Force, it also means mission readiness.

The lab's 11-person staff at Spangdahlem Air Base and Bitburg Annex clinics process an average of 5,100 tests monthly. In December alone, they did lab work on more than 1,000 patients. To help save time and ensure accuracy, the lab recently acquired state-of-the-art equipment, including a new arterial blood gas analyzer and hematology analyzer.

"Our technicians and machines team up as medical detectives in search of clues to aid medical care providers with patient diagnosis," said Maj. Sonya King, medical laboratory services flight commander.

However, despite even the best equipment, some things still simply take time to find conclusive evidence.

"Cultures to detect bacterial infections

Base lab earns national accreditation

By Maj. Sonya King
52nd Medical Support Squadron
Laboratory Services Flight commander

The 52nd Medical Group Laboratory Services Flight was awarded a two-year accreditation from the College of American Pathologists in late November.

Significantly, the organization's inspection team found no discrepancies in the group's geographically separated facilities.

Ancillary testing within the 52nd MDG and the 470th Air Base Squadron, NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen were also found discrepancy free.

The College of American Pathologists is an international organization that ensures civilian and military laboratories conform to a stringent set of rules under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act of 1988. It's the world's largest agency of

its kind and is considered the leader in quality assurance.

More than 1,000 checklist items are reviewed one-by-one in all areas of laboratory operations from quality control to management, proficiency testing, instrument maintenance, staff qualifications and training, safety and infection control. The group's inspection is comparable to other assessments testing mission readiness — a sort of medical lab operational readiness inspection.

The CAP tests base lab analysis accuracy by sending "blind" samples to the lab monthly. There's little margin for error and historically the lab has achieved 100 percent accuracy.

To help continue the best care, the first Thursday of each month the Spangdahlem Air Base laboratory and clinic close in the afternoon for medical readiness training.

take anywhere between 24 hours to five days to grow," Stanfill said. "There's just no way to make them grow any faster."

Hematology, chemistry, special chemistry, urinalysis, immunology, transfusion medicine and microbiology are all done at the base laboratories. For some highly specialized tests, such as tracking a patient's hormone levels, the lab ships specimens to reference medical laboratories for analysis.

General and specialized chemistry are performed in-house. One use of general chemistry includes testing glucose levels and liver functions. Specialized chemistry

provides such services as therapeutic monitoring to test how a prescribed drug reacts in a person's body.

"Because chemistry is done primarily through analyzing equipment, the trick is knowing how to interpret the data," said Staff Sgt. James Green, chemistry section NCOIC.

To learn such information, technicians get 52 weeks of Air Force technical training broken down into about six months of bookwork at Sheppard AFB, Texas, and another nine months of practical training at U.S. Air Force medical facilities.

In microbiology, base technicians grow urine, throat and blood cultures testing for bacterial infections. Two of the most common tests are for strep throat and urinary tract infections; however, the lab can also test for more elusive and deadly diseases such as a spinal meningitis by using spinal cord fluid.

The lab also houses a blood bank with supplies of each blood type for emergency uses such as trauma and surgery.

Base lab technicians also work in hematology, analyzing blood samples.

For many, even the thought of getting stuck with a needle sends shivers down the spine, but for Stanfill and the other base lab technicians, getting stuck with a needle to give blood for donation or testing, is a small price to pay for a healthy life.

Technicians learn patient empathy as they learn how to draw blood in technical school because the students learn by drawing blood from each other.

"Most people think lab technicians learn by sticking needles into oranges, but it's not true. It would have been a lot less painful though," Stanfill said. "Some of the students had never worked with a needle before."

After school, technicians improve the technique with the guidance of experienced technicians and practice.

Working with blood and other bodily fluids may not seem glamorous to most wing members, but for base lab technicians it's the stuff that solves mysteries and improves life.

Community Mailbox

ACT-Eifel

Dinner theater performances of the adult comedy, "Don't Dress for Dinner," take place March 9-11 and 16-18 at the Spangdahlem Community Activity Center. Doors open at 6 p.m., show starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$17.95 and are available at the Information, Tickets and Tours desk in the base community center. Make reservations at least three days in advance. Call Robert Benton at 452-5444 or the community center at 452-7381 for details.

Cub Scouts

The Cub Scouts local chapter seeks volunteers to help with summer day camp July 9-14. Call Gary Hackl at 06553-1745 or John Kennedy at 06561-948843 for details or to sign up.

Family support center news

The following classes take place in building 307 on Spangdahlem Air Base, unless listed otherwise. Call 452-6422 for details or to register.

■Deployment briefings take place 8-9 a.m. Tuesday, March 13, 20 and 27.

■A basic investing seminar takes place 6-8 p.m. Thursday in building 151 on Spangdahlem AB.

■European Jobseekers meets noon to 1 p.m. March 12.

The following classes take place in building 2001 on the Bitburg Annex. Call 453-7491 for details or to register.

■The Resume I workshop takes place 5-7 p.m. Thursday.

■An interview skills workshop takes place 1:30-4 p.m. Thursday.

■A transition assistance program seminar takes place 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. March 13-16.

Terra Nova

Testing takes place March 12-16 at Bitburg Elementary School. Third and fourth grade home-schooled students are invited. Call 453-7215 for details or to register.

Spring bazaar

The Spangdahlem Spouses and Enlisted Members Club Spring Bazaar takes place noon to 8 p.m. March 16, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. March 17 and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 18 in Hangars 1 and 2 on Spangdahlem Air Base. The event is open to all U.S. and NATO ID card holders, but closed to strollers and pets. Call Lorrie Hoskins at 06565-942431 for details.

Talent show

The Air Force family talent and base-level youth talent contest takes place 6-9 p.m. March 15. People ages 6-18 are

African animal tales

Spangdahlem Elementary School first- and second-grade drama club members performed "Anansi and the Moss Covered Rock" on base Feb. 22. Drama students will perform another play in the spring.

Senior Airman Esperanza Berrios

eligible to apply. Deadline for entry is Monday. Call 452-7381 for details.

Reading volunteers

The Bitburg Middle School School-Home-Community Partnership Committee seeks volunteers to help reading circles and book groups through June 12. Call Jesus Posadas at 453-7731 or e-mail Jesus.Posadas@eu.odedodea.edu for details.

Girl scouts

Local Girl Scout chapters seek volunteers for lone troop committee chair, treasurer, registrar and events committee chair positions. Call Lisa Denoncour at 06565-944587 for details.

Officer training

Deadline to submit officer training squadron applications is April 17. Packages with waivers must be submitted by April 3. Call the education office at 452-6063 for details.

Library news

■The Eifel library hours survey takes place through March 15. Forms are available at both locations.

■The Spangdahlem Air Base library book report contest takes place through March. Contest forms are available at the library front desk. The best entries win prizes.

Call the Spangdahlem AB library at 452-6203 or Bitburg Annex at 453-7056 for details.

German/American club

The German/American Friendship Club meets at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Hotel Victoria on B-50. Call Gisela Traut at 452-6172 or Bob Onsgard at 452-6058 for details.

Learning new skills

The 52nd Services Squadron skills development center offers the following classes in March:

The following classes take place in building 2002 on the Bitburg Annex. Call 453-6314 for details or to register.

■Quilting takes place 6-8 p.m. each Monday beginning March 19 through April 9. Another quilting class takes place noon to 2 p.m. each Thursday beginning March 22 through April 12.

■A four-session cake decorating class takes place 6-7:30 p.m. March 13, 15, 20 and 22. Cost is \$30.

The following classes take place in building 189 on Spangdahlem Air Base. Call 452-6841 to register.

■Framing takes place 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. March 11. Cost is \$25.

■Auto mechanics takes place 5-7 p.m. March 14 and 21. Cost is \$20.

■A two-session scrap booking class takes place 5:30-7:30 p.m. March 14 and 5:30-8:30 p.m. March 15. Cost is \$15.

■A five-week stained glass class takes place 5:30-7:30 p.m. March 15. Cost is \$20 plus supplies.

Movies

All movies play at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

Bitburg Castle Tonight The Pledge (R)

Detective Jerry Black, a retiring police chief in a small town, has made a promise he can't break. He's pledged to a mother he will catch the killer of her young daughter. (Violence and language.)

Saturday The Pledge

Sunday Dungeons and Dragons (PG-13)

The Empire has long been a divided land – an elite group of magic users and powerless commoners. Savina wants equality for all, but must fight Mage's plot to depose her and establish his own rule. The outcome of the race is far from certain and the Empire's survival hangs in the balance. (Violence.)

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Wednesday Bounce (PG-13)

Buddy is delayed at the airport waiting for a flight. While there, he meets a fellow passenger, Greg, who opts to be bumped. When the flight is resumed, Buddy thinks he's doing a good deed by swapping tickets with Greg. The flight crashes, so Buddy checks on Greg's widow but doesn't plan on falling in love with her. (Language and sexuality.)

Thursday Proof of Life (R)

With her husband, Peter, kidnapped, Alicia retains the services of a free-lance negotiator named Thorne who mounts a bold operation to rescue Peter that could as easily result in disaster as in triumph.

Spangdahlem Skyline Tonight Vertical Limit (PG-13)

A young climber must launch a treacherous and extraordinary rescue effort up K-2, the world's second highest peak, to save his sister and her summit team in a race against time.

Saturday Vertical Limit

Sunday Almost Famous (R)

He's only 15 years old and backstage at a rock concert, welcomed in to the inner sanctum of the bands he idolizes. It would be a heady experience for any teen-ager, but it was especially so for one whose ambitions and ideals had been formed by the music of the day. It was an experience that would shape his life for many years. (Language, drug content and nudity.)

Monday Almost Famous

Tuesday Almost Famous

Closed Wednesday and Thursday

Times and movies are subject to change.
For the most current information,
call 453-7541.

Trier or bust

A bicyclist heads for Trier following green and white signs marking the "Kyllradweg," a paved bicycle and walking path leading from the Speicher train station to Trier. Along the path, bicyclists and hikers will find benches to rest upon and village cafes to stop in for lunch or a snack. Bicycling, the ride from Speicher to Trier takes about 2.5 hours at a casual pace.

Senior Airman Jennifer Lindsey

Locals use fire to chase winter away

By Iris Reiff
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

Throughout the weekend, people may see village bonfires and burning crosses. This carnival tradition dates back to the middle ages, in which a person-sized doll symbolizing winter is burned to chase away winter spirits.

Today, the 150-year-old tradition continues throughout the Eifel region with bonfires on the first Sunday of Lent.

While traveling east of the Kyll river shore within the Bitburg-Pruem area and along the way to the Luxembourg-Belgium border, people may witness the Huetten bonfires burning from a distance on the village's highest point.

In the middle of the fire stands a pole, which carries a cross often covered with straw. For days, village youth gather wood for the fire. Their work continues until about 8 p.m. and food and beverages keeps the

work from getting boring. In some villages, the gatherers wear a special hat and T-shirt with the word "strohhuette" printed on them.

Before the fire is set, locals gather around to hear the oldest male youth wood gatherer reads stories of the village's most amusing events that took place throughout the year. After the fire, the gatherers visit village homes reciting poems and singing songs.

The youth also walk through town collecting butter, eggs, flour and milk. Using the ingredients, a bakery or volunteers make waffles for everyone, which are served at the village hall or a local guesthouse.

Activities vary from village to village. In some, youth take the ingredients to the village's most recently married couple and ask them to bake an egg cake.

Although most people believe the bonfire tradition is done to chase away the winter spirits, some historical documents tell

another story. Because Huette means "stake," the Huetten bonfire tradition is similar to those where witches were condemned and burned at the stake. The ritual fire, used for purification and to ward off evil spirits, may have a dual meaning.

Some people believe the bonfire, especially the illumination of the cross, signifies hope for a good harvest.

In some areas, wheels or barrels wrapped in straw are set ablaze and rolled down hills. When farming played a much more vital role in the Eifel region, townspeople paid close attention to the direction the fire's smoke blew. If it went over a cornfield, farmers believed the next harvest would be good.

While there's no clear explanation for the bonfire tradition and today's farmers no longer depend on it for good fortune, local villagers continue the fun, social event.

Out and about

■ Visit flea markets Sunday inside and outside the Kroeve Halle; inside and outside the Bernkastel-Kues Gueterhall; on Trier-West Hornstrasse, near the Aldi grocery store; at the Alzey Rheinhessen-Center; inside the Zell Stadthalle and at the Koblenz Alte Viehmarkthal.

■ Listen to a concert by La Ritma, performing Afro-Latin percussion and more at 8:30 p.m. March 11 at the Bitburg Boda House cultural center. Tickets are 12 DM and are available by calling 06561-6001-144 or 145.

■ Attend the opening ceremonies of an art exhibition by Marwan, at 11 a.m. March 11 at the Wittlich Georg-Meistermann-Museum. The art show takes place March 11-13. The museum is open 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday through Friday and 2-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

■ See the Schwab Ensemble performing ballads at 8 p.m. April 21 at the Bitburg Boda House cultural center. Tickets are 35 DM and are available by calling 06561-6001-144 or 145.

■ Attend the annual Bitburg Boda market taking place March 16-18 in front of the Bitburg Boda House. During the Boda market, stores open 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday in Bitburg and 1-6 p.m. Sunday.

■ Speicher museum officials invite

Americans to a special exhibition at the Heimat museum. The exhibition, "Never Again A War," shows the bombing of Speicher and end of World War II. The museum opens 2-4 p.m. Sunday and 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday.

■ Trier's annual wine and gourmet festival takes place March 9 through April 8. For details, visit the German language Web site at www.wein-festival.de.

■ The Manfred Mann's Earth Band concert takes place March 31 at the Kaiserslautern Kamming center. Call 0651-145990 for tickets.

■ Jazz and swing music of the Glenn Miller Orchestra plays March 23 in the Trier Europa Halle. For tickets, call the Trierischer Volksfreund Press Center at 0651-145990.

■ Listen to renowned operas and operettas at 8 p.m. March 30 at the Boda House cultural center. Entry is \$14 for adults and \$8 for students. For details and tickets, call the Bitburg Cultural Society at 06561-6001-144 or 145.

■ See 'Evita,' a musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber, April 21 in Trier. For details, call 0651-145990.

■ Reserve your tickets now for the "Magic of The Dance" tap dance show April 4 in the Bitburg Edith-Stein school. This is an encore performance.

For tickets, call 0651-145990.

■ Attend a jazz concert by the Kenny Wheeler Quartet May 3. For details and tickets, call the Trierischer Volksfreund Press Center at 0651-145990.

■ Attend the 31st International Volksmarch of Malberg May 19-20. Call the Kyllburg tourist information office at 06563-930244 for details.

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Information, Tickets and Tours offers the following tours in March. Call the Spangdahlem Air Base Community Activities Center at 452-6567 or the Bitburg Annex community center at 453-7120 for details.

■ Visit Brugge, March 10. Cost is \$45 for adults, \$35 for children ages 3-12.

■ Paris overnight, March 17-18. Cost is \$185 for adults, \$130 for children ages 3-12.

■ Black Forest express, March 17. Cost is \$55 for adults, \$45 for children ages 3-12.

■ Dinner and wine probe, March 17. Cost is \$35 per person.

■ Prague shopping express, March 23-24. Cost is \$75 for a single seat, \$95 for a double seat for one person.

■ Cochem medieval dinner, March

24. Cost is \$65 per person.

■ Bavarian castles express, March 31. Cost is \$80 for adults, \$75 for children ages 3-17.

■ Castle Drachenfels, Birkenstock store and dinner at the Outback Steak House, March 31. Cost is \$35 for adults, \$30 for children ages 3-12.

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The outdoor recreation program sponsors the following trips in March. Winter hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call 452-7176 for details.

■ Indoor climbing wall trip, March 10. Cost is \$25 per person. Minimum age is 14.

■ Underground mountain biking, March 11. Cost is \$30 biking only; \$50 with two-hour spa. Minimum age is 10.

■ Luxembourg cave rappel, March 17. Cost is \$30 per person. Minimum age is 14.

■ Castle, cave and spa in Valkenburg, the Netherlands; March 18. Cost is \$45 per person with spa; \$20 without. Minimum age is 18, unless accompanied by an adult.

■ Saalbach, Austria ski trip, March 24-27. Cost is \$290 with ski rental; \$265 with own equipment. Minimum age is 18, unless accompanied by an adult.

Lady Barons take first Division II European title

By Denny Lemmon

Bitburg High School girl's basketball coach

Bitburg High School won its first girl's Division II European basketball championship Saturday in Mannheim by beating the International School of Brussels 45-36.

Of the Lady Barons three regular season losses, two were at the hands of ISB.

Mid-way through the championship tournament, it looked as though the Lady Barons would come up a game short on the road to the title. In its second game against the No. 1 seed from Division II South, the Patch Panthers, Bitburg pulled out a 31-30 nail bitter.

A day earlier, the team smashed AFWORTH 43 to 23. The next day they defeated Patch. On Saturday afternoon, they out-hustled the tournament No. 1 seed, ISB for the crown.

In the first game of the tournament, the Lady Barons fielded a crippling full-court press that allowed them to jump to a 26-9 halftime lead over a stunned Allied Forces North Lady Lions. Crystal Bessler led a balanced offensive attack with 10 points.

Constance Maziel hit nine while Katie Carr and Kimberly McLear each contributed seven. Bessler and Carr led in the rebounding department with seven each.

The next day Bitburg played the Patch Barracks squad, the undefeated champions of the Division II South. Senior captain McLear sparked the Barons offensively in the first half with 12 of her game high 15 points. Junior guard Maziel held Lady Panther's All-European guard Joanna Miller to 15 points, well under her 20-plus point game average.

The Lady Barons had a difficult time generating much of an offensive attack, but managed to hold a 28-23 lead going into the fourth quarter. Slowing play down to kill the clock, Bitburg almost lost the game as the Panthers scored six to the Lady Barons mere two in the fourth. With two seconds to go in the game and the Lady Barons holding just a one-point lead, the Lady Panthers had the ball out of bounds under its basket with a chance to win. An alert Maziel stole the pass intended for Miller to end the game.

"In the championship, the game plan was

to win by defensively controlling the two stars from Brussels — Kate Tuthill and Colleen Cotter," said Rik Carr, junior varsity coach.

At the end of the first quarter, Cotter had zero and Tuthill six. However, a previously unknown scorer from ISB, Jill Euteneuer, popped in eight to give the Raiders 14 first-quarter points. The Lady Barons offense sputtered and only senior captain Brittany Sanders found the net, scoring four points. Bitburg switched up to its half-court trapping defense, sparking a 21-point run to take the lead 25-19 at the half. Maziel scored 10 of her game high 19 points in the crucial second quarter spurt.

Bitburg continued to pressure the Lady Raiders during the third quarter, outscoring ISB 10-6.

"With one quarter to go and leading by 10, it appeared the Barons were on their way to winning the championship for the first time in school history," Carr said.

The Lady Raiders' Cotter wasn't ready to just quietly hand over the game. She burned

the nets for two three-pointers and two free throws to pull her team to within six. Maziel showed why she was selected tournament most valuable player by icing the victory with seven points in the final quarter. She also made five steals, three assists and pulled down three rebounds.

Joining Maziel on the All Tournament Team are McLear and Bessler. McLear and Wesley Canada were also selected to the Division II North All Conference Team. Maziel and Bessler were awarded honorable mention all conference for their efforts in league play.

In the European Division I tournament, Ramstein edged out Heidelberg to win the title. The 2001 Lady Barons beat the Division I Champions from Ramstein and the runner-up Heidelberg Lions earlier in the year.

Tournament box score:

Maziel 32 points 8 rebounds 6 assists 9 steals, McLear 26 14 4 9, Bessler 25 14 0 1, Carr 13 12 0 3, Canada 7 4 1 9, Brittany Sanders 7 14 0 4, Janise Russ 5 3 1 4, Laura Piccolo 2 0 0 0, Jessica Wood 1 1 0 0, Elizabeth Regalado 0 1 0 0, Deneshia Roberson 0 3 0 0, Quenessa Bush 0 1 0 0.

Eifel Sports World

Eifel Lanes bowling news

■The American Red Cross Bowl-A-Rama takes place 2-6 p.m. March 10. Entry fee of \$15 includes three games and a chance to win door prizes. Call the ARC at 06561-616740 for details.

■The Eifel Lanes Bowling Center offers family discounts noon to 5 p.m. each Sunday.

■League bowlers practice for only \$1.50 a game 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Bowlers must present a current ABC/WIBC card to receive the reduced price.

Call the bowling center at 452-6217 for details.

Health and wellness center news

■The tobacco cessation four-session course meets at 9 a.m. Wednesday. The course offers practical methods to quitting the habit.

■A two-session class on stress management takes place at 3 p.m. March 13 and 27. The course offers various techniques in reducing and controlling stress.

■Fitness 101, offering tailored exercise programs for course participants, takes place at 10 a.m. March 15.

■Learn about the new Body Master equipment in weight training 101 taking place at 2 p.m. March 19.

■Women of Iron, a class teaching resistance training basics, takes place at 2 p.m. March 22.

All classes take place in building 192 and the Spangdahlem AB fitness center. Call 452-9355 for details.

Football

The Langefeld Longhorns seeks players for the 2001 season, especially skill positions and defense. Season runs May through September. Call Coach Simon Gorz at 0212-200693 or 0173-2607838 for details.

Youth sports

■Youth baseball registration continues through March.

■Operation Night Hoops, a basketball league designed exclusively for base teens, takes place today through April 7. The activity is open to youth ages 13-18 who are activity cardholders. Registration continues through Wednesday.

In memory

Staff Sgt. Joseph Hunter, 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., sings the National Anthem Feb. 25 at the Dura Lube 400 NASCAR race at the North Carolina Speedway. Next to Hunter is Darrell Waltrip, a NASCAR driver, and his wife, Stevie. Hunter and other members of the 4th FW were at the event to help pay tribute to Dale Earnhardt, who died Feb. 18 when his car hit a wall on the final lap of the Daytona 500 race in Florida.

Senior Airman Bryan Bouchard

Volunteers are also needed to help mentor and coach.

The Eifel Youth Sports office is located in building 2007 on the Bitburg Annex and in building 125 on Spangdahlem Air Base. Call 453- 6274 or 452-6729 for more information.

Rodeo

The Spangdahlem Air Base rodeo team seeks new members to compete in the European Rodeo Cowboys Association competition. Call Travis Beck at 06561-949669 or Daniel Wagley at 06561-670298.

Golf

Correction: The Icebreaker Golf Tournament takes place at 9 a.m. April 7 at the Spangdahlem Air Base golf course. Teams consist of four people, 18-hole select shot. Cost is \$10 per person plus green fees. Call 452-6821.

Racquetball

A racquetball tournament takes place March 24-25 in the Spangdahlem Air Base fitness center. Registration fee is \$20 before March 9. Cost for two matches is \$5. Call Staff Sgt. Susan O'Donnell at 452-6634 for details.